(a) how many private companies/foreign companies were issued licenses to provide basic telephone services; and

(b) how many of them are joint venture companies with participation of foreign investment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Seven private companies registered in India have been issued licences to provide basic telehpone services.

(b) Presently two of them are joint venture with participation of foreign investment.

Telephone facilities

†1652. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to the answer to the Unstarred Question 5285 given in the Rajya Sabha on 16th May, 2002 and state:

(a) the position with regard to providing telephone connections to the remaining 5944 villages of Uttaranchal at the end of June, 2002; and

(b) the positing regarding the targets fixed for the current year alongwith the detail of the position in respect of the targets for 1600 villages which were to be provided telephone connections till July, 2002 by linking them with Wireless in Local Loop (WLL)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Out of 5944 uncovered villages in Uttaranchal as on 01.04.2002, telecom facility was to be provided to only 5607 revenue villages as 337 villages were uninhabited. During the current year 1180 villages, including 1153 on WLL systems, have already been provided with Village Public Telephones up to 14.07.2002. 4146 villages are planned to be provided with telecom facility on satellite media subject to availability of funds. Remaining 281 villages to be covered on WLL are likely to be provided with telecom facility within one month of provision of stable power supply to BTS by Uttaranahcal Power Corporation for WLL system.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.